

TEXAS LEGISLATURE

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KILDEE. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to follow my neighbor and colleague from Texas. I also served in the State House and the State Senate. To compare what is being done by those heroes in Oklahoma now to suicide bombers is outrageous. That is just overboard.

This is why we have the problems we have in Texas right now. They do not recognize the comity that has been traditional in the Texas legislature. We used to never fight over anything in a partisan manner except redistricting and election bills. Now we are going to have election and redistricting bills coming every 2 years because of our colleague, the gentleman from Texas, (Mr. DELAY).

This is unprecedented. In 50 years, no State has ever opened redistricting just for partisan purposes until now in Texas and Colorado. The Texas Attorney General, who is a Republican, issued an opinion within the last month that said, no, the legislature does not have to reopen the redistricting process. So we are having to bring it here to the floor of the House simply because my colleague from Houston, Fort Bend County, brought it to the legislature to eliminate 10 Members from Texas.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLINS). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken up later today.

AMENDING THE RICHARD B. RUSSELL NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH ACT

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 870) to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to extend the availability of funds to carry out the fruit and vegetable pilot program.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 870

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PILOT PROGRAM.

Section 18(g)(4) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769(g)(4)) is amended by inserting before the

period at the end the following: “, to remain available until the close of the school year beginning July 2003”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 870.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 870, a bill to extend the period of time for which participating schools may provide free, fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables to children in schools. This pilot program, which was authorized as part of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, provides fruits and vegetables to children in an effort to increase their consumption of these healthful foods.

I am proud that Ohio was selected to be one of the four States participating in this pilot program and that two of these schools are in Ohio's 8th district, which I represent, Nevin Coppock Elementary School in Tipp City, Ohio, and Stebbins High School in Riverside, Ohio.

On April 10, the other body passed S. 870, which allows additional time for the current funds to be expended. It does not authorize new money to be spent on the pilot. S. 870 enjoyed broad bipartisan support in the other body and is supported in the House on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, a recent evaluation of the fruit and vegetable pilot program by the United States Department of Agriculture says that this pilot was popular amongst parents, teachers, and students, and successfully increased children's interest in making fruits and vegetables a regular part of their diet. Now, this is an encouraging finding at a time when rates of overweight and obesity amongst children are at an all-time high and that these rates are continuing to rise steadily without any sign of a reverse in this troubling trend.

Growing scientific evidence demonstrates a strong link between nutrients found in fruits and vegetables and the reduced risk of several chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and others. According to the Office of the Surgeon General, diet-related diseases cost this country approximately \$117 billion each year, and several other estimates are even larger.

Nutrition experts strongly encourage Americans to consume a variety of

fruits and vegetables on a daily basis, yet data from the national nutrition and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that only one in four Americans, about 24 percent, eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day, and children tend to eat less fruits and vegetables than adults. This evidence makes clear the importance of our efforts to encourage children to develop an interest in fruits and vegetables at a young age.

Today, I am pleased with the strong level of bipartisan support received by this pilot program and urge my colleagues to support S. 870 to extend this pilot into the next year.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 870. This legislation allows us to extend the current fruit and vegetable pilot program enacted under the farm bill for an additional year. Because of the short time frame after enactment of the farm bill, many of the schools were not able to begin their participation in the program as quickly as we had hoped. As a result, many schools will have funds remaining at the end of the school year.

The issue of fruit and vegetable consumption by our children is critically important. Studies continually show that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables at a young age leads to healthier diets in adulthood. Coupled with the alarming rates of childhood obesity, we should be doing all we can to expand fruit and vegetable consumption among our children. Educating our children now about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables will lead to a healthier Nation in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation marks an important step as we begin our discussion to reauthorize our Federal child nutrition programs. As part of reauthorization, it is my hope that we can expand the benefits of this pilot to all our Nation's children. I urge all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, in the world of athletics, each year our young people get bigger, they get stronger, and they get faster. Unfortunately, many of our young people just get bigger. They consume diets that are very high in fat. Sometimes a serving of fruit equals a serving of Fruit Loops and a serving of vegetables equates to French fries or potato chips.

As has been mentioned previously, 60 percent of Americans currently are overweight, 20 percent are obese, and among our young people the percentages are just about the same. An alarming trend has been that we are starting to see atherosclerosis in elementary school children. These are

fatty deposits in the coronary arteries which lead directly to heart disease. This was unheard of 20 or 30 years ago. Type 2 diabetes is exploding among our young people. And of course this again is related to being overweight. Many children do not exercise. They watch TV and play video games.

Senate 870 authorizes the extension of a valuable school pilot program. The fruit and vegetable pilot program provides fresh fruit and fresh vegetables to a limited number of schools during the current school year. A recent Department of Agriculture study found that normal-weight children consumed significantly more fruits than overweight children. Studies have shown a positive relationship between consuming a balanced healthful diet of protein, fruits and vegetables and children's performance in the classroom and on the playing fields.

I thank my colleagues from the Committee on Education and the Workforce for bringing this small, yet important, piece of legislation to the floor and urge my colleagues to vote to extend this valuable pilot study.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I also am pleased to join with the chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) in support of this important legislation. I commend them for bringing it to the floor.

I have always been told that we are what we eat. And I believe while it might appear that this legislation does not and will not go a great distance, I believe that children, like all of us, learn what they live. If they learn the importance of fruits and vegetables as part of a balanced diet, then I think they will end up making use of that. I think they will end up saying to themselves that they like it. They will end up saying that it makes sense.

We know that in the long run it is going to reduce illness. It will keep people away from the doctor's office, out of the hospital. It will cut down on our health care costs, which are rising all of the time at runaway speeds.

So I think this is a tremendous measure that will pay serious dividends. I am pleased that the Committee on Education and the Workforce has brought it to the floor, and I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 870, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to extend the availability of funds to carry out the fruit and vegetable pilot program.

We hear a great deal about the importance of teaching our children good nutrition as well as about the epidemic of obesity and poor eating habits among American children. This morning's USA Today even had several articles about nutrition and obesity throughout the paper, this is a very important issue and one that is near and dear to my heart and that of

my district. However, for all the press, talk and concern, we do far too little about it. The first year of the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program is nearing its end, but remaining funds need to be used to extend the program until the end of the 2003–2004 school year so we can get the necessary information as we begin to debate child nutrition reauthorization later this year.

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized funds for a pilot project to test the feasibility of offering free fruits and vegetables to students during the school day. One hundred six schools implemented the project this school year in Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan and the Zuni Tribal Organization in New Mexico. The program sought to determine the best practices for increasing both fresh and dried fruit and fresh vegetable consumption in elementary and secondary schools. Schools reported tremendous successes and the final USDA report on the project concluded that 80 percent of students in participating schools were very interested in the program, and 100 of the schools participating believe that it is feasible to continue the pilot if funding is made available. I feel it is incumbent upon Congress to continue this pilot. Consumption of fruits and vegetables increased, while anecdotal evidence showed a decline in soda sales from vending machines in schools. Making existing funding available for pilot schools to use this upcoming school year will extend the success of the project.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I urge your support for this legislation today, and ask you again to support additional consumption opportunities as we debate child nutrition reauthorization in the upcoming Session. We must do more to encourage their purchase in our schools and to promote their consumption on an individual level.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please support S. 870, a bill by Senator HARKIN that will continue funding the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program until the end of 2003–2004 school year.

This is a great pilot that the Agriculture Committee strongly supported, and I fully intend on fighting to extend this project in the Children's Nutrition Reauthorization.

The pilot provides fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables to children in 107 schools. Of the 105 schools that have reported back results, 100 are asking USDA to keep the program.

This program is popular with schools and nutrition advocates, in light of the growing problem of childhood obesity. But, more important, the program is popular with the kids! Eighty percent of the students were very interested. Parents are excited about the program since 71 percent of the students are now more interested in eating vegetables and fruits.

Mr. Speaker, this is a successful program for which we need to extend funding until the end of the next academic year. It would be a pity to take these nutritious and healthy foods away from the children halfway through the school year.

I urge my colleagues to please support S. 870.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 870 which authorizes the extension of a valuable school pilot program included in the 2002 Farm Bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Fruit and Vegetable pilot program.

This program has provided an extraordinary opportunity to distribute free fruits and vegetables to students throughout the school day in an effort to increase their consumption of these healthful foods. Because this pilot did not begin until nearly midway through the school year, participating schools have requested that the Congress allow them additional time to complete the pilot program.

I have been pleased with the popularity of this pilot program and the evidence of its success. The USDA recently released a report on the pilot program. Within their evaluation they found that it was popular among most students, parents, State representatives, teachers, principals, pilot managers and food service staff. The USDA's evaluation also found that students consumed over 90 percent of servings offered thus far.

No one can dispute the importance of a healthy diet, especially for growing children. Yet, for a number of reasons, many children don't eat enough fruits and vegetables as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid. This pilot also is critically important to help encourage healthy dietary habits among the growing number of children in this country who are overweight or obese. USDA found that nearly 93 percent of participating schools have provided some nutrition education and promotion activities along with the program.

Identifying ways to encourage children to consume a wide variety of healthful foods will be a major focus of the upcoming reauthorization of the National School Lunch Program and other key child nutrition programs. During the reauthorization process, we will look to this pilot program for some answers regarding how we might help increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables in school by making accessible the types of fruits and vegetables that children most enjoy.

Because research has shown that children develop dietary habits early in life, the increased availability of fruits and vegetables in school can make a lasting impression on the life-long consumption patterns of these youths. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to vote to extend this pilot study.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 870.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

KRIS EGGLE MEMORIAL VISITORS' CENTER IN ORGAN PIPE NATIONAL MONUMENT IN ARIZONA

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1577) to designate the visitors' center in Organ Pipe National Monument in Arizona as the "Kris Eggle Memorial Visitors' Center", and for other purposes, as amended.